

Claim Amendments

Please amend claims 75-79 as shown below.

Listing of Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-71 (Cancelled)

72. (Previously presented) A database searching apparatus comprising:
a search engine operative to provide search results including search listings according to rank; and
a database searchable by the search engine and including a plurality of search listings, at least some search listings being associated with advertisers, the search listing associated with an advertiser including
a search term specified by the advertiser, and
a desired rank specified by the advertiser for a search listing and a maximum cost per click (maximum CPC) and a cost per click (CPC) associated with the desired rank for the search term and the advertiser,
account management server means in data communication with the database for automatically adjusting the CPC for a search listing in response to advertiser inputs;
wherein, when the advertiser enters a new search listing or changes the maximum CPC of a search listing, the account management server means is operative to:
adjust the CPC of the advertiser's search listing to maintain the desired rank,
move the search listing to the highest rank possible without exceeding the maximum CPC of the advertiser's search listing,

maintain the CPC of the advertiser's search listing less than or equal to
the maximum CPC of the advertiser's search listing,
set the CPC of the advertiser's search listing no higher than necessary,
and
avoid setting the CPC of the advertiser's search listing so that desired
ranks and CPCs of other advertisers are not maintained.

73. (Previously presented) The database searching apparatus of claim 72
wherein the database further stores a timestamp associated with each desired rank, the
timestamp indicating a time the search listing was entered or changed.

74. (Previously Presented) The database searching apparatus of claim 73
wherein the search engine is configured to:
receive a search request;
locate one or more search listings having a matching relationship with the search
request; and
order search results from the one or more search listings using the CPC
associated with the one or more search listings.

75. (Previously presented) The database searching apparatus of claim 72
further comprising:
an account manager accessible by the advertiser to vary at least one of the
maximum CPC ~~cost-per-click~~ and the desired rank for a respective bid and
desired rank.

76. (Currently amended) The database searching apparatus of claim 75
wherein the account manager is further accessible by the advertiser to vary the
maximum CPC ~~cost-per-click~~ for two or more possible ranks specified by the advertiser.

77. (Currently amended) The database searching apparatus of claim 72 further comprising:

one or more software agents configured to:
receive advertiser bid information; and
act on the advertiser bid information to adjust the CPC ~~cost-per-click~~ for a specified search listing.

78. (Currently amended) The database searching apparatus of claim 77 wherein the one or more software agents is configured to:

increase the current CPC ~~cost-per-click~~ of the specified search listing if the rank of the specified search listing can be improved without exceeding the maximum CPC ~~cost-per-click~~; and
decrease the current CPC ~~cost-per-click~~ of the specified search listing without moving the specified search listing to a rank worse than the desired rank.

79. (Currently amended) The database searching apparatus of claim 78 wherein the one or more software agents are configured to decrease the current CPC ~~cost-per-click~~ of the specified search listing only if no other search listing will have its respective current CPC ~~cost-per-click~~ increased to decrease the rank of the specified search listing.

80-86 (Cancelled)